DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 041 304 CG 005 475

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TITLE	Differentiation in Programs of Study and Supervised Experiences in Elementary School Counselor Preparation Programs in the United States.
INSTITUTION	American Personnel and Guidance Association, Washington, D.C.; Western Illinois Univ., Macomb.
PUB DATE	24 Mar 70
NOTE	21p.; Paper presented at the American Personnel and Guidance Association Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, March 22-26, 1970
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$1.15
DESCRIPTORS	Counseling Instructional Programs, Counselor Certification, Counselor Evaluation, *Counselor Qualifications, *Counselor Training, Educational Programs, *Elementary School Counselors, Training Objectives

ABSTRACT

Programs for the preparation of elementary school counselors are studied from two aspects: (1) their differentiation from secondary counselor programs; and (2) their comparison with the standards proposed by the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision. 225 counselor preparation programs participated in the study which surveyed: (1) courses geared to work at the elementary level; (2) professional studies in school counseling; (3) the educational setting; (4) behavior science foundations; and (5) supervised experiences. Replies to the survey indicated that many of the suggested topics for instruction were indeed offered, though as electives. Areas of needed growth included: (1) studies in the behavioral science area; (2) uniformity of required hours of practice; and (3) supervision of practicum students by elementary school counselors. It was suggested that the present scarcity of elementary counselors accounted for the latter two deficiencies. (TL)

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DIFFERENTIATION IN PROGRAMS OF STUDY AND SUPERVISED EXPERIENCES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES

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National recognition of the need for counselors in the elementary schools has led to an increased demand for elementary counselors as well as to concern by counselor educators as to the adequacy of the professional preparation of individuals entering these elementary counselor positions.

A 1961 national study by Hill and Nitzschke of preparation programs showed very little specialized preparation for guidance workers in the elementary schools. In 1964 Nitzschke again studied the programs of graduate study in elementary school guidance in the United States with a depth study of 36 programs that considered their programs "distinctively different" from their secondary counselor preparation programs. These programs were stressing the developmental aspects of guidance and were preparing counselors to act as consultants and resource persons to teachers, parents, and administrators. Course emphasis was on child development, child study and appraisal, and elementary education areas for preparation in elementary school guidance. A recent study by Greene, Hill, and Nitzschke (1968) reported that 77 institutions were offering masters' degrees in elementary guidance that were "distinctively different" from their secondary counselor preparation programs, while 21 doctoral programs were listed as "distinctively different" for elementary guidance majors.

Although there is evidence of movement toward special certification for elementary school counselors (Furst, 1967; Van Hoose and Vafakas, 1968), many states still permit a certified counselor to work at any level. A July 1968, survey of the 50 state department of education guidance directors and the

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The research reported in this paper is based on part of Dr. Wehrly's doctoral dissertation at Texas A & M University under the supervision of Dr. Donald G. Barker, Professor of Education.

Washington, D. C., superintendent of schools office by the author indicated that as many as 308 colleges and universities may be preparing elementary school counselors. This means that counselors are coming to the elementary schools from programs other than those indicated by Greene, Hill, and Nitzschke (1968) as having special preparation for work at the elementary school level.

Procedure

During the fall term of 1968-69 the 308 institutional programs referred to above were asked to participate in a survey of their programs of study and supervised experiences. Two major objectives of this study were:

1. to ascertain the degree to which United States counselor education programs were differentiating their programs of study and supervised experiences for candidates for elementary school counseling and
2. to compare the data from these programs with the standards proposed for elementary school counselor preparation programs by the subcommittee of the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (Ohlsen, 1968b).

Usable replies were received from 225 counselor preparation programs. (An additional 51 programs reported that they did not prepare elementary counselors or had no separate programs for elementary counselors and did not complete the questionnaire.)

Courses Geared Especially to Work at the Elementary School Level

The summary of special courses geared to preparation for work at the elementary school level revealed that an average of five per institution were offered in the 225 programs. The courses geared especially to the elementary school level that were offered by 25 per cent or more of the 225 programs in

descending order of frequency were:

1. Guidance and Counseling Practicum (76%)
2. Guidance in the Elementary School (54%)
3. Individual Appraisal (39%)
4. Principles of Counseling (34%)
5. Introduction to Guidance (30%)
6. Psychometric Techniques (26%)
7. Group Processes in Elemetary School Guidance (26%)

Twenty-five additional courses were listed to a lesser degree as geared to the elementary school level.

Comments by several of the respondents from the programs indicated that many institutions were also differentiating within certain courses by providing different readings and activities for elementary and secondary counselors. Where programs were large enough, efforts were made to enroll only elementary counselors in certain sections of a core course and only secondary counselors in other sections of the same course.

Comparison of Topics in Programs of Study with ACES Subcommittee Proposed Standards for Elementary School Counselors

A major part of the study included the comparison of topics offered and required in the elementary counselor preparation programs with the topics recommended in the 1968 ACES subcommittee report on the proposed standards for elementary counselor preparation (Ohlsen, 1968b). The topics were from Part B, Program of Studies, and Part C, Supervised Experiences, of the proposed standards. They were summarized under these four areas: Professional Studies in Elementary School Counseling, the Educational Setting, Behavior Science Foundations, and the Supervised Experiences.

The study found that most of the topics listed in the ACES subcommittee report were available, though not generally required, in the majority of the institutions reporting on their counselor preparation programs.

The Professional Studies in Elementary School Counseling

Topics under the Professional Studies in Elementary School Counseling were offered and required more frequently than topics under the Educational Setting, the Behavior Science Foundations, and Supervised Experiences. Figure 1 shows the per cent of institutions offering and requiring these professional studies in elementary school counseling.

REFER TO FIGURE 1,

SEE ALSO TABLE I, APPENDIX, AND TOPIC LEGEND

Highest in required topics of study in the programs were counseling theories and techniques, which were required at 90 per cent of the institutions, and individual appraisal studies, which were required at 79 per cent of the institutions. All topics listed under the professional studies in elementary school counseling were required at 65 per cent or more of the programs.

The Educational Setting

Figure 2 shows the per cent of programs offering and requiring the study of topics under the Educational Setting. Many respondents commented that the first two of these topics were included in the teacher preparation prerequisite to

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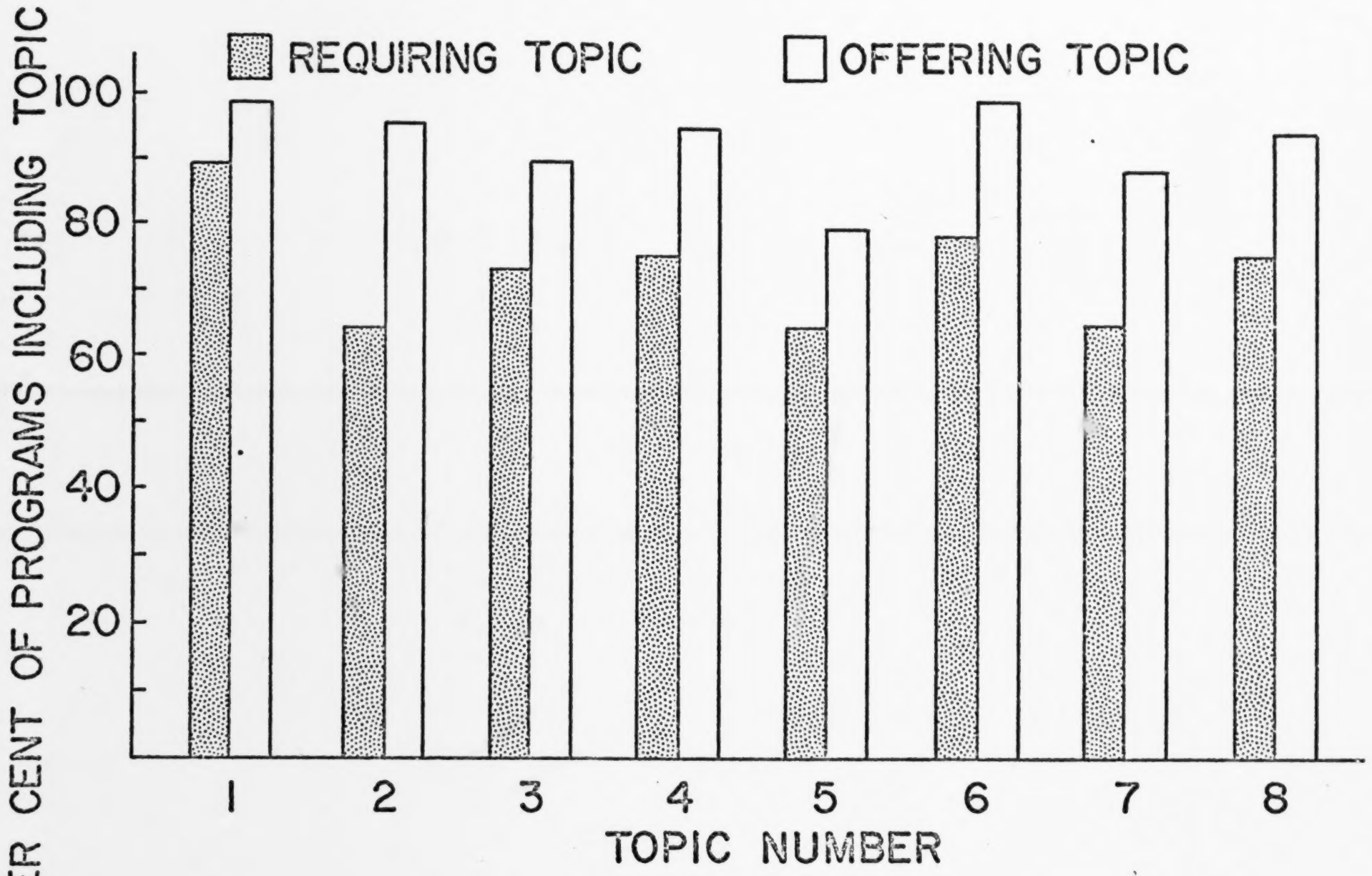
REFER TO FIGURE 2,

SEE ALSO TABLE II, APPENDIX, AND TOPIC LEGEND


REQUIRING TOPIC
OFFERING TOPIC
PER CENT OF PROGRAMS INCLUDING TOPIC
100
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60
40
20
1
2
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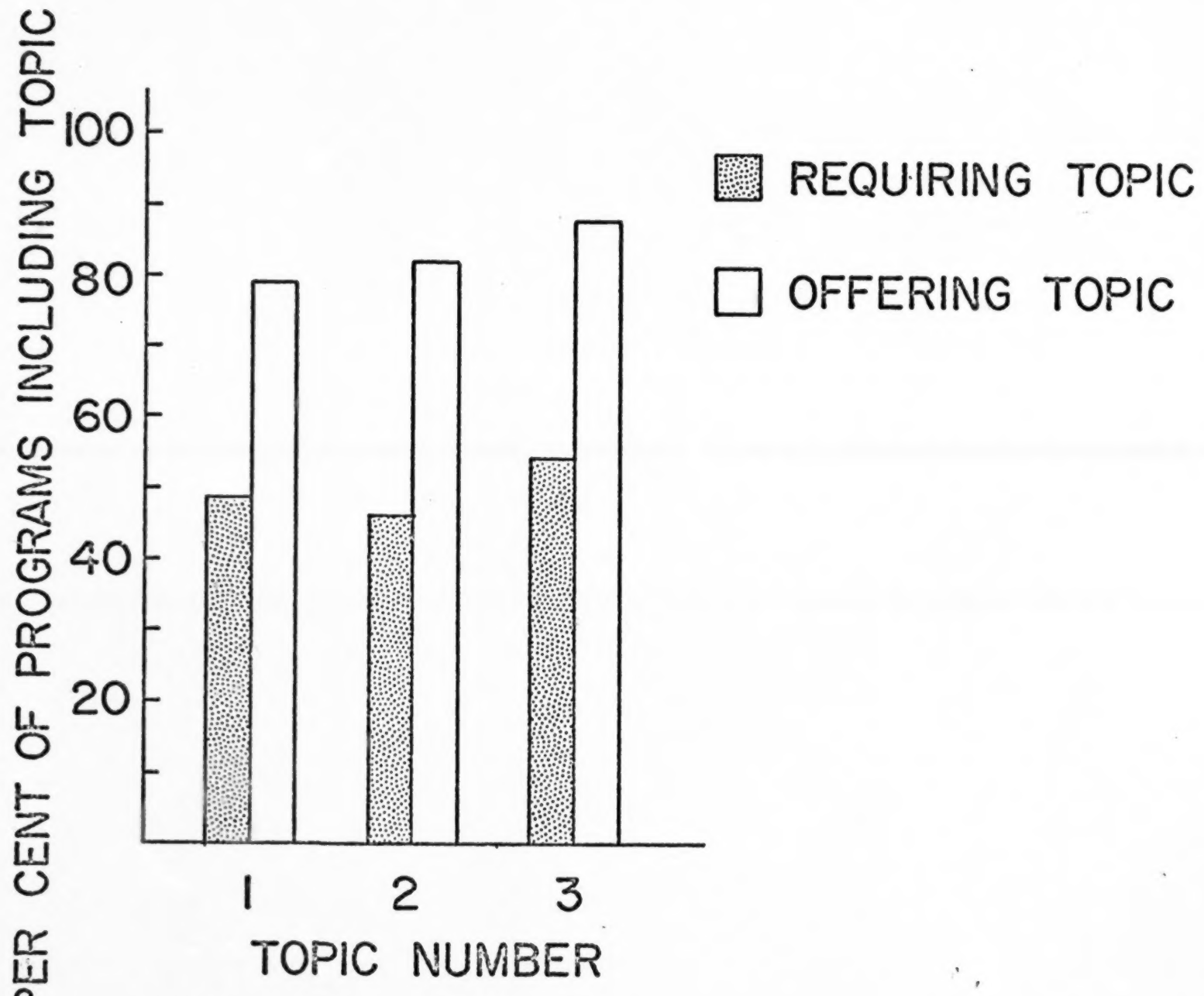
4
5
6
7
8
TOPIC NUMBER

FIGURE I.

Topic Legend for Figure 1

Topics Included in the Professional Studies
in Elementary School Counseling,
Figure 1

Topic Number	Topic
1	Counseling theories and techniques
2	Group procedures in guidance and counseling
3	Professional identification, the profession, and its ethics
4	Role definition, program development, and co-ordination of elementary school guidance services
5	The consultation process
6	Individual appraisal
7	Vocational development theory related to the elementary school
8	Research skills to enable the elementary school counselor to appraise the outcomes of his services


PER CENT OF PROGRAMS INCLUDING TOPIC
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TOPIC NUMBER
REQUIRING TOPIC
OFFERING TOPIC

FIGURE 2.

Topic Legend for Figure 2

Topics Included in the Educational Setting,

Figure 2

Topic Number	Topic
1	Purposes and organization of the elementary school
2	Elementary school curriculum
3	Philosophy and sociology of schools

their counselor education programs. As you can see, these topics were offered in three-fourths or more ot the programs but required by about one half.

Behavior Science Foundations

The disparity between availability of topic study and the required study of topics is especially evident in Figure 3 which summarizes the studies in the Behavior Science Foundations at the 225 programs of preparation for elementary school counselors. Although all six Behavior Science Foundations topics were offered at 65 per cent or more of the programs, child growth and development was the only topic required by more than half of the programs. About two-fifths of the programs required study of personality dynamics and theories, group dynamics, and theories of learning. Institutional requirements of the study of dynamics of family living and mental hygiene were especially low.

REFER TO FIGURE 3

SEE ALSO TABLE III, APPENDIX, AND TOPIC LEGEND

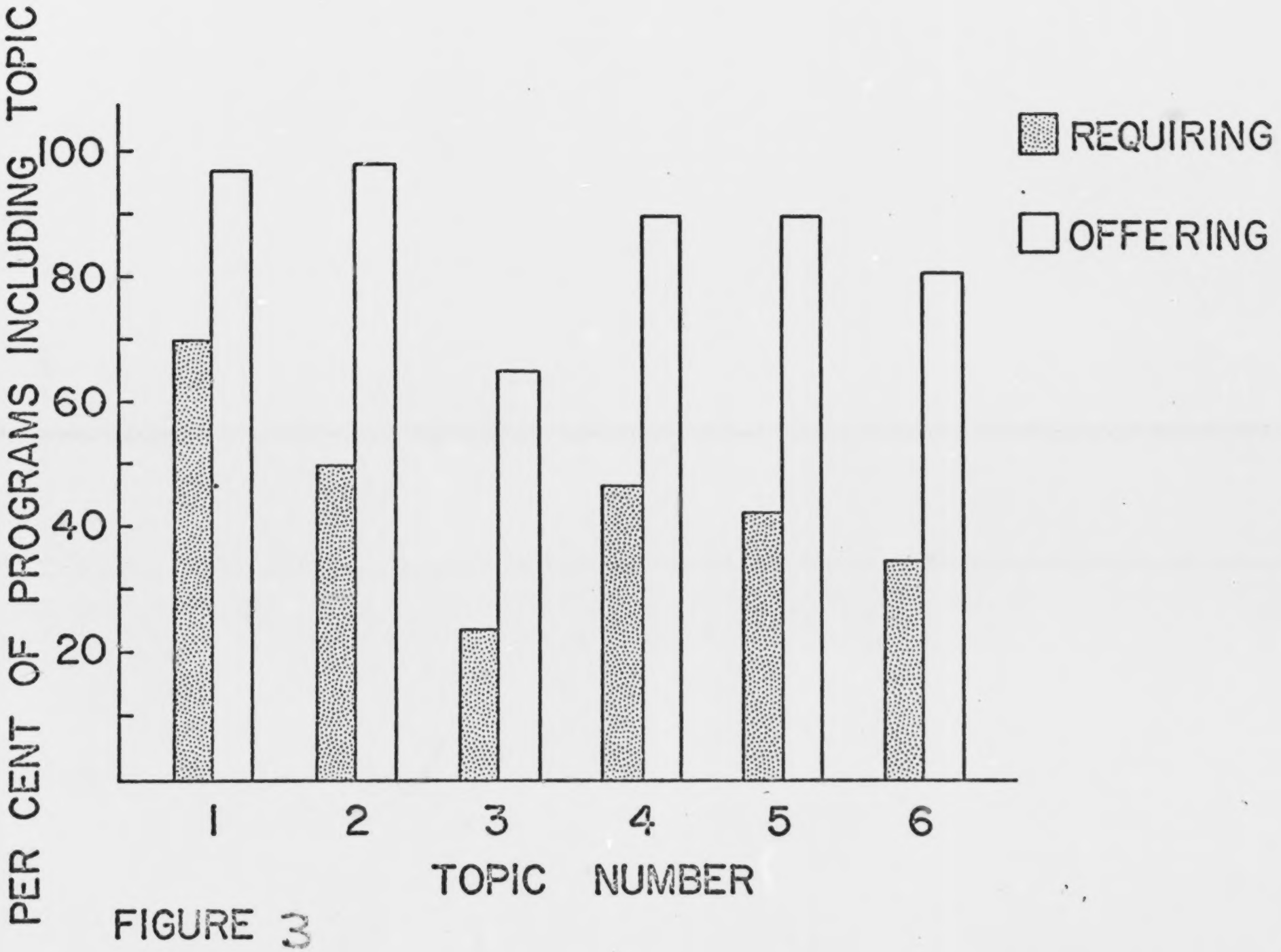
Supervised Experiences

The graphic representation of elective and required offerings in the laboratory experiences and practicum experiences, Figure 4, indicates that elementary counselor preparation programs across the nation were cognizant of the value of these experiences. This was particularly true of the practicum experiences.

REFER TO FIGURE 4

SEE ALSO TABLE IV, APPENDIX AND TOPIC LEGEND

The summary of minimum hours in actual counseling relationships in these practicum


REQUIRING
OFFERING
PER CENT OF PROGRAMS INCLUDING TOPIC
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TOPIC NUMBER

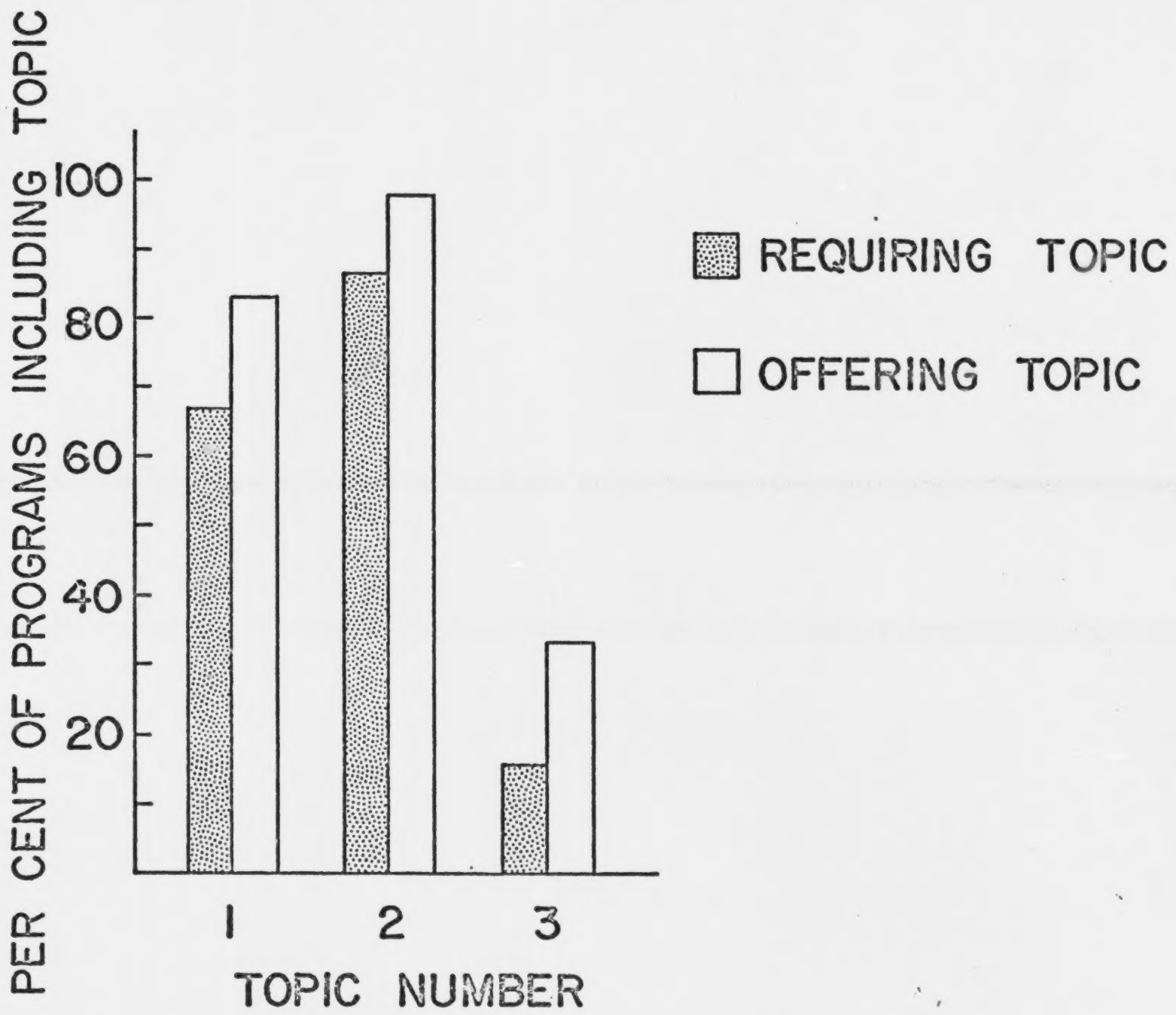
FIGURE 3

Topic Legend for Figure 3

Topics Included in the Behavior Science Foundations,

Figure 3

Topic Number	Topic
1	Child growth and development
2	Personality dynamics and theories
3	Dynamics of family living
4	Group dynamics
5	Theories of learning
6	Mental hygiene


PER CENT OF PROGRAMS INCLUDING TOPIC
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TOPIC NUMBER
REQUIRING TOPIC
OFFERING TOPIC

FIGURE 4

Topic Legend for Figure 4

Topics Included in the Supervised Experiences,

Figure 4

Topic Number	Topic
1	Laboratory Experiences
2	Practicum Experiences
3	Internship

courses, however, indicated a lack of uniformity with the range being from 15 through 240 hours. Of the 145 one-year programs reporting on minimum hours in counseling relationships, 52 programs required from 30 to 49 hours. Twenty-six programs fell in the range of 50 to 69 hours. The median hours spent in counseling relationships in the one-year program practica was 50.

Reports from 51 two-year programs revealed an even greater disparity in minimum hours in counseling relationships in the practicum with the range in hours being from 15 to 500. The median number of hours spent in counseling relationships in the two-year programs was 91.

The opportunities for internship experiences were very limited in most of the programs. The present one-year masters' programs in many institutions are not long enough to include internship experiences.

The availability of technological equipment for use with the supervised experiences was quite general and was increasing.

The on-campus supervisory staff at most institutions have had experiences in elementary school settings and have advanced academic training. About one half of the counselor education programs have reached the goal suggested for allotment of time for supervision of practicum and internship students in the proposed standards; i.e., supervision of five students should be equivalent to the teaching of one three-semester hour course. The use of elementary school counselor staff members to help in supervision of the counselor trainees is not yet a standard practice.

Discussion

An encouraging finding of the survey was that such a large percentage of the topics were available at so many of the counselor preparation programs.

Since the proposed standards for preparation of elementary counselors were presented only a few months prior to the study, it was especially heartening to realize that this much movement toward the inclusion of these topics in programs of study and supervised experiences had already occurred. The challenge appears to lie in moving these topics from the realm of elective to required studies if programs are to approximate the goals suggested in the proposed standards.

Two of the Professional Studies topics which are receiving national recognition as important in the program of studies for elementary counselor candidates and which are in special need of movement from the realm of elective to required studies are group procedures in guidance and counseling and the consultation process (Dinkmeyer, 1968; Faust, 1967; Fullmer, 1968; Kaczkowski, 1967; Ohlsen, 1968a).

The unresolved issue of the teaching prerequisite to counselor education was evident on the summary of offerings under the area, the Education Setting. The low per cent of programs requiring study of the purposes and organization of the elementary school and of the elementary school curriculum was probably the result of the teacher preparation prerequisite to so many counselor education programs. The opportunities to study the philosophy and sociology of the schools reflect the growing trend toward interdisciplinary studies in counselor preparation programs.

Requirement of suggested topics under the Behavior Science Foundations was particularly low. With current emphasis on the critical importance of studies in the Behavior Science Foundations, these topics are in special need of review and consideration for inclusion as required studies in elementary school counselor preparation programs (Eckerson and Smith, 1966; Faust, 1968; Meeks, 1968; Van Hoose, 1968).

The lack of uniformity in required hours in counseling relationships in the counseling practica across the nation is a thought-provoking situation. This would seem to indicate a real variance in opportunities for such learning among preparation programs.

Two aspects of the supervised experiences in need of improvement are the allotment of time for supervision of practicum and internship students and the supervision of practicum students by elementary counselors in the schools. Many respondents indicated that they were attempting to move toward the ACES proposed standards goal of five students as equivalent to at least one three-semester hour course. The current lack of qualified elementary counselors in the schools is probably the limiting factor in on-the-job supervision. An earlier study of elementary counselor preparation (Roach and Wehrly, in press) indicated that this was the situation in Texas and that the college and university staff members were having to carry out this supervision themselves in many cases until such time as more qualified counselors are in the schools.

Summary

The survey of differentiation in programs of preparation for elementary school counselors indicated a definite movement toward orientation of these programs to the needs of counseling at the elementary school level. Comparison of topics offered in elementary school counselor preparation programs with those listed in the proposed standards of the ACES subcommittee reavealed that most of these studies were available, though not generally required, in the 225 programs participating. The professional studies in elementary school counseling were offered and required more frequently than studies in the educational setting, the behavior science foundations, and the supervised experiences.

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APPENDIX

TOPICS OFFERED AND REQUIRED IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES

Table I. Professional Studies in Elementary School Counseling

	Offered	Required
Counseling theories and techniques	99%	90%
Group procedures in guidance and counseling	96%	65%
Professional identification	90%	74%
Orientation to elementary school guidance services	95%	76%
The consultation process	80%	65%
Individual appraisal	99%	79%
Vocational development theory related to the elementary school	89%	65%
Research methods	94%	75%

Table II. The Educational Setting

Purposes and organization of the elementary school	79%	49%
Elementary school curriculum	82%	46%
Philosophy and sociology of schools	87%	54%

Table III. Behavior Science Foundations

Child growth and development	97%	70%
Personality dynamics and theories	98%	50%
Dynamics of family living	65%	24%
Group dynamics	90%	47%
Theories of learning	90%	44%
Mental hygiene	81%	35%

APPENDIX (Continued)

Table IV. Supervised Experiences

	Offered	Required
Laboratory Experiences	83%	67%
Practicum experiences	98%	87%
Internship	34%	16%